

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMS #0036 0181334
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O R 181333Z JAN 10
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1129
INFO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000036

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [BEXP](#) [PGOV](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: HELPING ENTREPRENEURS: OMAN ANOUNCES 2010 SME CONFERENCE

¶1. (U) As a matter of policy the Government of Oman sees Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as an essential factor in driving the country's development and providing employment. In this regard, the GoO regularly and positively highlights growth in private sector hiring versus the public sector.

¶2. (U) In an effort to advance the role of SMEs in Oman, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) formally announced January 17 a SME conference and exhibition to be held from February 16-18 under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI), OCCI, and conference and exhibition organizers Envent and Trefoil.

¶3. (U) The conference themed "Financial opportunities and challenges for SMEs" is aimed at addressing the financial opportunities and challenges of SMEs in Oman with discussions and workshops addressing some of the key hurdles facing this business sector. Oman's SMEs have encountered long-standing difficulties in getting financing, which is hampering the sustainable development of the country. The conference's objective is to organize government, financial institutions and other enterprises to improve financing opportunities for SMEs.

¶4. (U) The 2010 edition of the SME conference and exhibition will also bring together more than 100 government representatives, business leaders, academics and professionals to explore the development of small and medium entrepreneurship, best practices in corporate governance and the economic environment for the next generation of entrepreneurs. Eminent regional and international speakers will identify the key issues in finance, current and future opportunities for SMEs, workshops and expert panel discussions will focus on creating an entrepreneurial culture in the region and address funding gaps.

¶5. (U) COMMENT: A U.S. Small Business Administration representative will be attending the conference. SBA Associate Administrator Perry Pickett will deliver a keynote speech during the opening of the conference. The SME Conference will come on the heels of the planned signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the SBA and the SME directorate of MOCI on February 14.
END COMMENT.
Schmierer